The **class featured in this entry** is an instrumental music class entitled Intermediate Band I, 31 students in grades 10, 11, and 12, ages 16-18. The relevant features of this class include a wide range of ability levels, special needs, learning disabilities, and ethnic and linguistic diversity. The ethnic diversity of this class comprises of 31 students, 25 Hispanic, 5 African American, and 1 White Caucasion.

The **relevant characteristics of students with exceptional needs and abilities** that influenced my planning for this instruction include English language comprehension, learning disabilities, varying levels of musical experience, combining students from different beginning level courses, and various levels of performance skills and general comprehension. The primary first language of the majority of students is Spanish, second language English. To improve delivery of my instruction I increase nonverbal instructional strategies. The students came from differing levels of beginning band courses, have various levels of performance talent and skills, and exhibit huge gaps in prior musical knowledge pre-high school. The majority of students started playing their instruments for the first time last year, only 2 students had band in middle school, and some had basic general music classes in middle or elementary school. This **influenced my planning** by having a variety of additional instructional resources available to struggling students, incorporating brief individual instruction time into ensemble rehearsal, and implementing an after school lesson program into the curriculum.

There are a **few particular instructional challenges that this class represents.** One example is instructing students with low level and high level abilities and knowledge at the same time. Although every student is in their second year of band there is a variety of talent, skill, and general knowledge levels represented. The students progressed at different rates based on a number of contributing factors. Some of these factors include the beginning band class they came from, how large there instrument section is, individual home practice, amount of optional after school lessons, individual learning styles, English language comprehension, and learning disabilities. One specific example is my first trombone player who has relatives and family members that are members of professional bands. That outside musical influence and family support has excelled his performance ability at a higher rate than the other students. **This poses a challenge when teaching both high and low level students at the same time.** Another example is my band has smaller instrument sections that limit confidence and strength of sound, peer mentoring opportunities, and balance and blend issues. In smaller instrument sections like the flute section consisting of only two players, these students lack the strength, confidence, leadership, comradery, and peer mentoring that other sections utilize to a greater extent, such as the 10 player clarinet section. These **varied instrumentation levels can be a challenge causing ensemble balance and blend problems** that need to be addressed daily. Another example is **varied music reading comprehension**. This poses a challenge because many students learn primarily by listening, while some learn primarily by sight. Students that rely first and foremost on learning the music by listening can inhibit their music reading comprehension. The other extreme can also pose problems, relying solely on reading the music and not listening critically. I constantly reinforce the concept of combining and balancing listening and reading skills to become a more complete musician. The fourth example is the socio-economic status of my students. Due to a **low income socio-economic status**, **no students can afford private instruction** by professionals on their instrument outside of class, besides lessons that I offer pro bono after school. Finally, attendance can be an issue with an 80.3% school wide attendance rate and a class that is near the end of the day.

**The objective for this lesson was to improve rhythmic and sight reading skills.** This objective was important for these students at this time for two main reasons. First chronologically, the students had just played their winter concert and were now starting to learn all new music in preparation for their next concert. When learning all new music it is important to emphasize rhythm fundamentals and sight reading skills. Second, the next concert the students are performing in is the annual band assessment concert, performing three compositions in front of adjudicators, and sight reading one piece. The objective of this lesson was important in preparing my students for the sight reading portion of this concert.

**My instruction sequence started** with long tones of 4, 8, 12, 16, and 32 beat lengths on either the first, third, or fifth note of the concert Bb scale. Students could choose which chord tone they wanted to play. I then handed out a new piece to sight read, Goin’ Home. The class then proceeded to performing scales in whole, half, and quarter notes. The videotape does not begin until the last scale is played using quarter notes. I then step off the podium and the students get out the music and materials to be rehearsed. When I step back on the podium, the band performs full ensemble rhythmic exercises. Students performed on their instruments, counted, and clapped. I connected this warm-up to the next item on the agenda, the first composition, The Tempest, on measure 69, that the students were confident in, and had rhythmic hits and rests very similar to the rhythmic exercises played earlier. After The Tempest, I prepare the students for a common rhythm in the upcoming sight reading piece, Goin’ Home, the dotted quarter note eighth note rhythm that was written on the whiteboard. Next, I guide the band through a **call and response activity**, going through a sight reading check list analyzing musical concepts that will be encountered in the music. The band then sight reads the musical composition Goin’ Home, an arrangement based on the main theme from Dvorak’s 9th Symphony (From The New World).

I provide the **opportunity for student choice** when I ask open-ended questions to the entire class that any student is free to answer. I offer student choice during downtime periods, before and after class, and between agenda items, where students have the option to practice individually, peer mentor, make notes in their music, or take a short break. During the videotape, between each sequence of instruction, you actively see students making these choices. At the start of every class I also provide a choice of chord tones when performing the long tone warm up and rhythmic exercises to create harmonies. Students constantly have the opportunity for choice when performing and interpreting the music.

I did many things to **inspire and encourage my students’ involvement in music**. I frequently **perform with my students** such as on clarinet at the beginning of the videotape when they are performing their last scale exercise. I also use **performance** **modeling on the clarinet** near the end of the recording at 13 minutes and 30 seconds, during the sight reading piece, Goin’ Home. I model the missed F natural played by the students, and then model the correct pitch F#, while also demonstrating good tone quality, vibrato, musical phrasing, and dynamics. At 3 minutes and 45 seconds into the recording during the rhythmic exercises, I clap with the students, and use **exaggerated body language** to feel the rests, reinforcing the rhythm and giving a visual example of how to feel the beat. By showing my students I am physically involved in the rhythmic exercise inspires and encourages their musical involvement. I often give **positive acknowledgements** to the ensemble when they are successful such as at 7 minutes and 40 seconds into the taping after I finish rehearsing the final crescendo in The Tempest, when I say “Solid!” with an exaggerated tone of voice. I often use interesting **voice inflections to** **create enthusiasm** and keep students listening carefully. Another example of when I use tone of voice and extreme voice inflections is 10 minutes and 30 seconds into the taping during the call and response sight reading check list. Half way through the exercise the students lose focus and the level of attentiveness decreases. I **adapt to the learning atmosphere** by using interesting voice inflections and body language to gain back student participation and attentiveness.

I establish a **classroom climate in which students feel free to express themselves** through an enthusiastic and positive approach to instruction, structured rehearsals that include full band and individual practice time, the use of call and response, an open and friendly interaction with students, and the use of positive behavioral instructional strategies. I use **facial expressions, body language, and vocal inflection** to create enthusiasm and a positive social atmosphere where students feel comfortable to express themselves. Specifically in the videotape, at 5 minutes and 8 seconds into the recording during the rhythmic exercises, a percussionist plays while I am on the podium causing a disruption; I raise my hand to my mouth, make eye contact, and create a look of astonishment on my face that is comical. It immediately corrects the behavior in a positive way instead of a negative verbal reprimand, which hurts ensemble morale, and lowers self esteem and confidence. **Positive behavioral instructional strategies** are crucial in effectively instructing my students. To make students feel free to express themselves, I sometimes address the entire class with a question which anyone is free to answer, such as 2 minutes and 55 seconds into the video mid way through performing the rhythmic exercises. I ask the class, “How do we count eighth notes?” and one trumpet player in the back row answers with “and,” while one of the percussionists demonstrates by performing eighth notes on the snare drum. The **call and response** sight reading checklist activity which begins at 9 minutes and 15 seconds is an example of students expressing themselves freely and encouraged to do so through a structured activity.

One example of an **unexpected occurrence** **during this lesson** happened during the call and response activity. This activity required the students to go through a checklist with the instructor engaging in critical analysis of music before reading it for the first time. During this activity, at 10 minutes and 20 seconds into the videotape, the students start to lose attentiveness. At that point I **modified my instructional strategy** through increasing body movement and hand gestures, and inflecting my voice in a more dramatic way to increase student focus and attentiveness. The video evidences the students’ quick response to these instructional strategies.

Throughout the videotape **I identified and corrected student errors** using a variety of instructional strategies. One example happens at 6 minutes and 55 seconds while rehearsing the end of The Tempest, when the percussion section does not crescendo, and the band does not play the last note together. To correct this error I give immediate verbal feedback after cutting off the band, while reinforcing my verbal feedback with different hand gestures and body language. I verbally state, “a little bit more crescendo in the percussion section, and make sure you land on the last note together,” I then isolated where the problem occurred in the last 2 measures and rehearsed that specific section. After the students were successful, I returned to the larger context of the section being focused on. Another example occurs at approximately 12 minutes and 55 seconds, when the band is sight reading the piece Goin’ Home and many students miss playing the correct sharps and flats in the key signature. I identified and modeled the problem on clarinet, then modeled the solution by performing in the correct key signature.

**An instance of verbal feedback during the video happens** every time I count the band in stating, “big breath,” or “breathe” on beat four. At 2 minutes and 2 seconds into the recording, I cut the band off after the first rhythmic exercise. I state, “Nice job, I can help you out, I can conduct small during the rests, and big when you have the hits, so you can look up if you need some help,” giving **verbal feedback and positive reinforcement**. At 2 minutes and 30 seconds I state again, “Nice job,” and at 2 minutes and 47 seconds I state with enthusiasm, “Solid!,” after the students successfully perform two of the rhythmic exercises increasing confidence, enthusiasm, and positively acknowledging the students. At 3 minutes and 34 seconds I give the following **verbal feedback** to help the students perform the rhythms more accurately, “Good, it helps to play the quarter notes long and the eighth notes staccato.” At 3 minutes and 57 seconds, I state, “Good, you can count it, 1 and 2, or ta ti ti ta, whatever you need to do,” giving **verbal feedback** on two different ways to count rhythms. After another rhythmic exercise, starting at 5 minutes and 2 seconds I state, “Not bad, now…,” give a **nonverbal** look of astonishment with my hand over my mouth to the percussionist playing out of turn, and then continue to address the ensemble stating, “look at where you play, what beats you play on…” and proceed to count the rhythms, loudly for notes, and quietly for rests. I then state, “Ok, look at the beats that you play on, and be aggressive when it comes to that, tap your foot, try it one more time.” While I give this **verbal feedback**, I inflect my voice to draw attention to what I’m saying, and accompany the verbal feedback with nonverbal feedback. The **nonverbal feedback** I give, which happens starting at 5 minutes and 13 seconds, is moving my entire body back and forth feeling the beats, stomping my foot, and using hand gestures. At 11 minutes and 20 seconds a saxophone student asks, “What’s the G# fingering,” and I give her verbal feedback stating, “G# is the first, second, and third fingers, pinky, it’s just like Ab,” while I nonverbally demonstrate the correct finger position using my hands.

The **information I provided students so that they would know how they were to be assessed** came in the form performance rubrics, daily reinforcement of rehearsal procedures, positive acknowledgements, and immediate verbal and nonverbal feedback. Performance rubrics are used in performance quizzes and student self-assessments. These are identical to rubrics used in the solo/ensemble city and state assessment music festivals. I provided information on assessment of daily rehearsal procedures and routine with a large orange poster on the far wall of the band room, seen throughout the entire video. This poster is a T-Chart with the title, P.A.R.R., which is an acronym for the students being “**P**roductive, **A**ppropriate, **R**espectful, **R**esponsible,” a school wide initiative involving positive behavioral intervention and supports (PBIS). Below the title is the T-chart stating appropriate and inappropriate rehearsal procedures and behaviors that they would be assessed on. I give constantly inform the students through immediate verbal and nonverbal feedback how they are being assessed throughout the video.

**I use many formal and informal assessment tools to monitor and evaluate student understanding.** Some of the assessment tools I used are ensemble and individual student performance rubrics, making notes on a daily basis, after and sometimes during rehearsals. I videotaped the rehearsal and used the recording as an assessment tool. **I use instructional technology as assessment tools, digitally recording rehearsals using a laptop computer.** I play back past recordings for student’s self-assessment, showing improvement and engaging them in critical listening activities. I use my eyes to visually assess student understanding while they are performing. I use my ears to critically analyze and assess student understanding and performance constantly throughout the rehearsal process.

**I received feedback from my students indicating their understanding of my expectations** through verbal feedback and non verbal music performance on their instruments, and body language. Specifically, this first happens at 50 seconds into the videotape after the scale warm-up when I step off the podium. The students clearly showed their understanding of my expectations by organizing their music and warming up immediately. Another instance happens at 8 minutes and 12 seconds, the percussionists click their sticks sounding they are ready, and signaling the class to prepare to play after I step on the podium. The students give their immediate attention by picking their heads up, give eye contact, and cease practicing. I then immediately deliver instruction. When I want the ensemble to rehearse together, I stand on the podium, raise my baton, start to conduct and count the band off, verbally reminding them to take a breath. When I do this the band begins to perform at the specific location in the music giving me feedback that they understand my expectations. When I instruct the band to stop performing through conducting, all the students immediately cease to perform. This is clearly seen throughout the entire video, clearly showing that students understand my expectations.

**My knowledge of students needs influenced my planning and delivery of my lesson** in many ways throughout the videotape and my instruction throughout the year. Many of my students lack rhythmic fundamentals such as syncopation and rhythmic independence. This influenced my planning and delivery by including daily rhythmic exercises to supplement the music being studied for the concerts. The students start performing these rhythmic exercises at 1 minute and 50 seconds into the videotape. The knowledge of my students backgrounds, environment, and social lives lead me to deliver my instruction in a way that is high energy and as interactive as possible. In implementing the sight reading portion of the instruction, I initially planned on verbally talking through the sight reading checklist while the students listened and followed along with the handout. The knowledge of my students needs influenced the planning and delivery of my instruction by incorporating a **call and response activity** into the sight reading check list, along with using enthusiastic body language and voice inflection to more effectively impact instruction and student learning. This activity begins at 9 minutes and 21 seconds into the video recording.

**I established a learning environment that was supportive of student learning** through practicing rehearsal etiquette and positive acknowledgements. Specifically in the videotape, two ways I establish a learning environment that promotes student learning are constantly reinforcing behavioral expectations such as the podium rule and posting on the walls expectations and desired behaviors. The first specific example happens every time I step off the podium to transition between agenda items. This is ensures a supportive learning environment by giving students time to peer mentor and talk with each other about the music, get out their materials, and warm up on their instrument in their own way so they are prepared to rehearse. The second example is the large orange poster posted on the far wall, a T-Chart with P.A.R.R. at the top of expectations and behaviors. This T-Chart ensures a learning environment that is supportive of student learning through displaying appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and expectations of the band room. The acronym P.A.R.R. (Productive, Appropriate, Respectful, Responsible) is at the top, with the T-chart giving examples of behaviors that students should and shouldn’t do.

**The selected instructional strategies I chose in this lesson provided for my students musical growth**. These strategies include music performance modeling on the clarinet, verbal instruction, non verbal instruction, positive behavior instructional strategies, and call and response. I used exaggerated inflection in my voice to intensify the instruction I was delivering to my students to increase the impact of their learning. Non verbal instructional strategies included the use of exaggerated body language, hand gestures, conducting, clapping, and eye contact. I used music performance modeling on the clarinet, one of the most powerful strategies at my disposal, to deliver the most impactful instruction to my students during this lesson nurturing their musical growth. Through positive behavior interventions and supports I was able to provide for students musical growth. I used strategies such as body language, eye contact, voice inflection, and enthusiastic instruction to positively influence and correct inappropriate behaviors that happened throughout this lesson increasing instructional time and musical growth.

In **reflection of this lesson**, I feel I have demonstrated the ability to sequence and deliver instruction that was effective in impacting student learning. The video shows a clear sequence of instruction: scales, rhythmic exercises, rehearsal pieces, sight reading analysis activity, and sight reading music. Each step of the sequence connected and reinforced the next step in the sequence. The students performed scales in whole notes, half notes, and ending in quarter notes where the video starts, increasing the complexity of the rhythms connecting to the next step of the sequence, the daily rhythm exercises. The daily rhythmic exercises grew in complexity from quarter note rhythms to eighth note rhythms, and then connected the rhythms in the exercises to a section in the musical composition The Tempest the students were familiar with. After building confidence performing a musical composition the students were familiar with, this connected to the next step of sight reading a musical composition the students were unfamiliar with. To prepare students for sight reading, a call and response activity was chosen to actively involve the students in analyzing the piece of music Goin’ Home, increasing the ability to perform the piece successfully for the first time. This activity directly connected to the final step in the sequence of instruction, the actual sight reading performance of the piece Goin’ Home.

**I would modify my instruction and assessment in this lesson if I could teach it again in a few different ways**. I would use more performance modeling and expressive conducting to impact student learning on a higher level than verbally giving instructions. I directly show what is possible musically through my performance. I would perform on brass or percussion instruments and not just the clarinet. I would try and increase the attentiveness of the class by stepping off and on the podium more, emphasizing the podium rule. Instead of being on the podium almost the entire time, I would increase the amount of time spent working one on one with students, or sitting in different instrument sections performing with the students. I would have students play individually, and use a student that played their part successfully as an example to the others, giving positive acknowledgements. I would reduce verbal instruction and use more non-verbal and performance modeling to communicate my instruction and concepts. I believe despite these few changes that could have been done, I strongly believe this was an effective lesson based on the instructional strategies applied and the sequence and delivery of instruction throughout the lesson, and thus had a significant impact on student learning.

There are many **subsequent learning experiences** I will design for these students based on this assessment. I will create multi-layered rhythmic exercises that can be performed at the beginning of class to work on ensemble tempo issues and independence of musical line while sustaining the beat. I will choose rehearsal pieces that add more complex syncopation and rhythmic complexity to continue improving rhythmic skills and counting. I will add a short improvisation warm up where students tap their feet, count, and improvise a beat pattern promoting rhythmic pulse and accuracy in relation to tempo. I will choose rehearsal pieces with varying styles, articulation, dynamics, form, and cultural context, to give a variety of opportunities to apply musical concepts addressed during this semester. I will increase the time spent on long tones in the warm up routine, adding crescendos and decrescendos for a varying number of beats to further develop tone quality. I will incorporate scale rounds to focus on intonation and balance problems in the ensemble.